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An Essay on the Causes of the Decline of Foreign Trade, Consequently of the Value of Lands of Britain, and of the Means to Restore Both. Begun in the Year 1739.

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cent. An interesting note is added in this connection to the effect that both hotel proprietors and employes prefer the English and American visitors; these stay longer on the whole, and although their demands may be rather high, they exhibit a generous and open-handed nature.

The standard of the year's prosperity is the percentage of beds occupied. Thus an average of 25 per cent. beds occupied is regarded as a *bad* year, 26 per cent. to 28 per cent. is considered a *poor* year, 29 per cent. to 32 per cent. is reckoned a *middling* year, 33 per cent. to 36 per cent. is a *good* one, and 37 or upwards is a *very good* year. Since 1894 there has only been one very good year, while one good year, four middling years, five poor ones, and one bad year are reported. The highest percentages of beds occupied are found in July and August, their averages being 58 per cent. and 76 per cent. respectively. April, May, and June show respective averages of 20 per cent., 22 per cent., and 30 per cent., while the average for September reaches about 40 per cent.

Efforts are being made to entice foreign visitors to Switzerland during the winter months to such places as St. Moritz and Davos, where winter sport offers facilities for enjoyment, but the hotel proprietors report that the increase of visitors in winter diminishes the number of summer holiday-makers.

It is very easy to deduce from the facts stated in this Jubilee Pamphlet that Switzerland's foreign visitors are of the utmost importance to the prosperity of the whole country; they set money flowing in various directions, and exercise a material influence upon the general finance of the land.

A. MURIEL FARRER

An Essay on the Causes of the Decline of Foreign Trade, consequently of the value of Lands of Britain, and of the means to Restore Both. Begun in the year 1739. (London, 1744.)

THE authorship of this tract is a matter on which different opinions have been expressed. At one time the balance of evidence appeared to me in favour of its ascription to Sir Matthew Decker, as stated on the title-page of one edition. Since then, a further examination of the material has led me to doubt this conclusion, for reasons which can be briefly stated.

Before turning to the examination of this evidence, a word is necessary as to the authorship of another tract, the "*Serious*

Considerations on the several high Duties which the nation in general (as well as its trade in particular) labours under, &c. By a well-wisher to the good people of Great Britain. London, 1743," which has been generally attributed to Decker. On this point contemporary evidence is unanimous. The book is stated to be written by him by well-known writers, and the plan which it suggests as a substitute for existing taxes, namely, a tax on houses, as a test of consumption, was evidently a matter of considerable discussion. It was treated as well worth consideration by a writer like Fauquier, and was respectively supported and attacked by others. One hostile writer in 1757 speaks of it as "a Proposal commonly called Sir Matthew Decker's Scheme." So far, however, as the tract is concerned, it was not published under his own name, and the references to his authorship appear to be subsequent to his death in 1749. Internal evidence, so far as it goes, points to his authorship. It was obviously written by someone having considerable knowledge of the East India Company's affairs, and is much more like the work of a man of affairs than that of a professional writer. The style is simple and direct, and somewhat resembles the few letters of Sir Matthew Decker which remain. Under the circumstances, there is little particular reason for doubting the accuracy of the view thus expressed. On the other hand, scattered contemporary statements as to authorship are not a very sure ground for certainty in the case of an anonymous pamphlet like that in question. This matter has been dealt with first because some part of the arguments against Decker's authorship of the "Decline of Foreign Trade" has rested on the incompatibility of the two works.

The "Decline of Foreign Trade" was published anonymously in 1744 by J. Brotherton, the title-page, however, recording that it was begun in 1739. In 1749, the year of Decker's death, a so-called second edition, but a mere reprint of the first, was issued in Dublin, bearing Sir Matthew Decker's name. In 1750 Brotherton published a second edition without any author's name, in which an addition is made to the Preface, containing these words: "The bookseller desiring a second edition, the opportunity of correcting the mistakes in the first was a sufficient inducement to comply with his request." A profession of willingness to make further corrections follows. This, of course, suggests that the author was alive, and though the process of printing and publication may have occupied some time in the eighteenth century, Decker's death in March of the previous year seems to put him out of the question.

On turning to internal evidence, the first matter which presents itself is as to the probability or improbability of two tracts propounding different schemes proceeding from the same hand. It is necessary, however, to point out that in both the leading idea is the levy of taxes according to the power of consumption, the house tax in the "Serious Considerations" being taken as a test, while in the "Decline of Foreign Trade" a schedule of consumption of luxuries is drawn out. Again, in the "Serious Considerations" a tax on the consumption of tea is proposed. But the alleged incompatibility of a common authorship of the two rests on the improbability of the two being written *at the same time*, a feature which is emphasised by the statement that the "Decline of Foreign Trade" was begun in 1739. Moreover, the author of the "Serious Considerations," in mentioning his proposal as one for taxing consumption, definitely distinguishes it from a General Excise, which he condemns as inquisitorial, adding that he opposed the excise measure of seven years previously, and advocates the house tax as a means of attaining the desired end, without any of the disadvantages associated with the excise. It is surely improbable that he would, at the very same time, be advocating a method of taxation necessarily inquisitorial. In the next place, the two works differ greatly in method and style. The one, the "Decline of Foreign Trade," is elaborate in arrangement, and somewhat turgid and involved in style, while the other reads like the brief deliverance of a man unaccustomed to beat about the bush, and anything but diffuse in the expansion of his ideas. He writes continually in the first person, a feature by no means frequent in the former tract. In addition, however, to these differences, there is one particular reason which increases the difficulty attending the hypothesis of Decker's authorship of this work. It contains a very definite attack on the monopoly and methods of the East India Company, with which, of course, Decker's interests were closely bound up, thus again negating the attitude taken by the writer of the "Serious Considerations."

In the matter of external evidence, there is considerable difference of opinion. Fauquier, in the second and third editions of "Ways and Means," 1756 and 1757, attributes the work to Richardson, about whom he clearly knows little or nothing. So, too, does Chalmers in 1783. On the other hand, Tucker ascribes it to Decker, in his *Brief Essay on Trade* in 1750. This leads to a reference to the same effect by Lord Townshend in a letter to this author. His authority, however, is of little value as he writes, "You will wonder, but it is very true that I had not seen

or even heard of Sir M. Decker's Essay on the causes of the Decline of Foreign Trade, till I found it quoted in your essay." But this renders still more important the withdrawal by Tucker in the next edition of the "Brief Essay on Trade" (1753) of any reference to Decker as the author of the tract in question. Under the circumstances, the omission of what was definitely stated three years before certainly seems to indicate the discovery and correction of a mistake. Postlethwayt, however, attributes the work to Decker in the "Universal Dictionary of Trade," in the editions of both 1751 and 1774, and also in "Great Britain's True System" in 1757.

The matter seems much as follows. About the time of Decker's death, there was for some reason or other a belief current that the work in question was due to him. As evidence of this, we have the Dublin edition, and the references by both Postlethwayt and Tucker, the latter of whom, at any rate, was not affected by the Dublin title-page, since he was referring to the quarto edition of 1744. In a year or two, however, Tucker sees reasons for abandoning this ascription, while Fauquier, who in his first edition makes no mention of any author, in his second and third editions attributes the work to Richardson.

Whether the work was by Richardson is difficult to determine; that rests mainly on Fauquier's testimony. But, leaving this aside, in the lights of the facts given above, certain conclusions seem well-established, namely:—

- (1) That it was not by Decker.
- (2) That it was not by the author of "Serious Considerations."
- (3) That the author was alive in 1750.

E. C. K. GONNER

THE LABOUR INSURANCE LAW IN HUNGARY.

KEEPING pace with industrial improvement Hungary is trying to establish effectively all those institutions for the protection of workmen which are necessary to peaceful social evolution. A notable manifestation of this endeavour was the passing of Act XIX. of 1907, treating of the insurance of industrial and commercial employes against illness and accidents. We should like to make the reader acquainted with the antecedents, principles and chief provisions of this Act as briefly as possible.

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